

## Message Text

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ACTION ARA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-07

L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 AID-05 TRSE-00 EB-08 OMB-01 /075 W

-----048050 031317Z /40

P R 022130Z DEC 77

FM AMEMBASSY BOGOTA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 5026

INFO AMEMBASSY CARACAS

USSOUTHCOM

AMCONSUL BARRANQUILLA POUCH

AMCONSUL CALI POUCH

AMCONSUL MEDELLIN POUCH

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: ELAB, MILII, PGOV, PINS, PINT, CO

SUBJECT: THE WEEK IN COLOMBIA

1. SUMMARY. THE HOUSE APPROVED LEGISLATION PROVIDING FOR A CONSTITUTIONAL ASSEMBLY AND THE SEPARATION OF CONGRESSIONAL AND PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS, BUT THE BILL'S LEGALITY MAY BE CHALLENGED. AN IMPORTANT ALLY OF PRESIDENTIAL PRE-CANDIDATE TURBAY WAS ORDERED ARRESTED ON CORRUPTION CHARGES. A MAJOR DEMOCRATIC TRADE UNION SUSPENDED ITS PRESIDENT. THE CHIEF OF THE JOINT STAFF WILL PROBABLY BE RETIRED SHORTLY AND SEVERAL MAJOR MILITARY PROMOTIONS ARE EXPECTED. THE AMBUSH OF A POLICE PATROL DISTURBED A WEEK OF DIMINISHED INTERNAL SECURITY PROBLEMS. END SUMMARY.

2. CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY BILL PASSED. THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, USING EXTRAORDINARY PARLIAMENTARY MEASURES, GAVE FINAL APPROVAL TO THE GOVERNMENT-SPONSORED LEGISLATION WHICH WILL ESTABLISH A CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY AND SEPARATE THE CONGRESSIONAL AND PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS. OPPOSITIONERS OF THE LEGISLATION SAY THEY WILL CHALLENGE THE BILL'S LEGALITY.

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3. ARREST WARRANT ISSUED FOR MAJOR TURBAY SUPPORTER. A WARRANT HAS BEEN ISSUED FOR THE ARREST OF ALBERTO SANTOFIMIO, PRESIDENT OF THE CHAMBER OF REPRESENTATIVES AND A MAJOR SUPPORTER OF LIBERAL PRESIDENTIAL PRE-CANDIDATE JULIO CESAR TURBAY. SANTOFIMIO, WHO

ENJOYS CONGRESSIONAL IMMUNITY AT THE MOMENT, HAS BEEN CHARGED WITH CORRUPTION (SEE BOGOTA 10080). TURBAY, MEANWHILE, REITERATED HIS SUPPORT FOR SANTOFIMIO, CLAIMING THE CHARGES ARE POLITICALLY MOTIVATED.

4. CTC PRESIDENT SUSPENDED. THE DEMOCRATICALLY-ORIENTED CONFEDERATION OF COLOMBIAN WORKERS (CTC) FACED ANOTHER LEADERSHIP CRISIS WHEN THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE DECIDED, NOVEMBER 24, TO TEMPORARILY RELIEVE PRESIDENT GUSTAVO DIAZ RAGA OF HIS DUTIES. ACCORDING TO CTC ACTING PRESIDENT HURTADO, DIAZ WILL BE ON LEAVE UNTIL A NATIONAL CONGRESS, SCHEDULED FOR JANUARY 19-21, CAN CONSIDER CHARGES AGAINST HIM. TRADE UNION SOURCES INDICATE THESE CHARGES MAINLY CONCERN MALADMINISTRATION AND INCOMPETENCE ON THE PART OF DIAZ, AND ARE NOT RELATED TO MISUSE OF FUNDS OR TO DIAZ' ACTIVITIES IN THE JOINT TRADE UNION CONCUJ OR IN POLITICAL CIRCLES. THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE PLANS TO INVITE ALL OF THE DISSIDENT FEDERATIONS, WHICH HAD DISAFFILIATED FROM THE CTC LATE LAST YEAR, TO ATTEND THE JANUARY CONGRESS. THIS CAUSED SPECULATION THAT DIAZ' REMOVAL COULD LEAD TO A REUNIFICATION OF THE CTC. IN A SEPARATE INCIDENT, THE UTC'S CUNDINAMARCA FEDERATION, UTRACUN, REPLACED JORGE CARILLO AS THAT GROUP'S FIRST VICE PRESIDENT. CARILLO IS ALSO FIRST VICE PRESIDENT OF THE UTC. THE INCIDENT PROBABLY RELATES TO INTERNAL UTC POLITICAL MANEUVERING IN WHICH CARILLO AND UTRACUN PRESIDENT ALVARO RAMIREZ ARE POTENTIALLY RIVAL CANDIDATES TO REPLACE UTC PRESIDENT TULIO CUEVAS.

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5. HEAD OF JOINT STAFF TO BE RETIRED; SEVERAL PROMOTIONS EXPECTED. ACCORDING TO EMBASSY SOURCES AND LOCAL PRESS SPECULATION, THE HEAD OF THE JOINT STAFF GENERAL JOSE MATAALLANA PROBABLY WILL BE RETIRED SHORTLY. ALTHOUGH THE GENERAL, A FORMER HEAD OF THE ADMINISTRATIVE SECURITY DEPARTMENT (DAS WHO HAS NOT BEEN PARTICULARLY FRIENDLY TOWARD THE US, DENIES THE REPORTS, EMBASSY SOURCES CONFIRM THE PRESIDENTIAL DECISION AND SPECULATE THAT MAJOR GENERAL ROBLEDO, INSPECTOR GENERAL OF THE ARMED FORCES, COULD REPLACE MATAALLANA WHO HAS BEEN OFFERED A SPECIAL ASSIGNMENT RELATED TO NARCOTICS INTERDICTION (SEE BOGOTA 11172). AS EXPECTED, SEVEN PROMOTIONS TO THE RANK OF BRIGADIER GENERAL, FIVE IN THE ARMY AND TWO IN THE NATIONAL POLICE, HAVE BEEN UNOFFICIALLY ANNOUNCED AS PART OF REGULAR CHANGES IN THE MILITARY.

6. PUBLIC ORDER. THE REVOLUTIONARY ARMED FORCES OF COLOMBIA (FARC) ATTACKED A POLICE CONVOY IN THE REMOTE CAQUETA DISTRICT, KILLING FOUR AND INJURING EIGHT PERSONS. THIS WAS THE THIRD ASSAULT THIS YEAR AGAINST POLICE UNITS IN THE REGION. THE ATTACK DISTURBED A WEEK OF LITTLE REPORTED GUERRILLA ACTIVITY.  
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Margaret P. Grafeld  
Declassified/Released  
US Department of State  
EO Systematic Review  
22 May 2009  
**Markings:** Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009